

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7528

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT,BE

SUBJECT: VETERAN SOCIALIST MAYOR OF ANTWERP DIES

1. LODE CRAEYBECKX, MAYOR OF ANTWERP FOR 30 YEARS AND DRIVING SPIRIT IN THE SPECTACULAR POSTWAR GROWTH OF BELGIUM'S GREAT PORT CITY, DIED JULY 25. THE 79-YEAR-OLD SOCIALIST POLITICIAN HAD ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO RETIRE AFTER THE OCTOBER COMMUNAL ELECTIONS BUT NO ONE WAS SURE THAT THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN MR. ANTWERP IN BELGIUM POLITICS FOR A GENERATION REALLY MEANT IT.

2. CRAYEYBECKX, A NATIVE SON WHO HAD MADE HIS WAY UP THROUGH THE SOCIALIST PARTY APPARATUS IN FLANDERS, BECAME ANTWERP BURGOMASTER IN 1947 AT THE HEAD OF A SOCIALIST-CATHOLIC PARTY COALITION WHICH HAS GOVERNED THE CITY EVER SINCE ITS LONGEVITY HAS BEEN BASED ON THE LEGENDARY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CRAEYBECKX AND LEO DELWAIDE, NOW AN OCTOGENARIAN, WHO HAS LED THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLES (CATHOLIC) PARTY IN ANTWERP AS LONG AS CRAEYBECKX THE SOCIALISTS. AS ALDERMAN OF THE PORT, THE CITY'S NO. 2 JOB, DELWAIDE JOINTLY ENGINEERED WITH THE MAYOR ANTWERP'S POSTWAR BOOM IN A BOW TO THAT STORIED PARTNERSHIP, THE CITY HAS NAMED DELWAIDE ACTING BURGOMASTER PENDING THE MUNICIPAL BALLOTING IN OCTOBER.

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3. ANTWERP'S MAYOR IS APPOINTED BY THE KING ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL. NORMALLY THE FIRST NAME ON THE COUNCILMAN LIST OF THE PARTY HEADING THE MUNICIPAL COALITION IS PROPOSED TO THE PALACE HEADING THE SOCIALIST ELECTORAL LIST THIS YEAR IS MRS MATHILDE SCHROYENS , (63) FORMERLY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND NOW AN ALDERMAN OF THE CITY. IF THE LONG-LIVED SOCIALIST-CHRISTIAN COALITION OUTLIVES CRAEYBECKX AND IF THE OLD GUARD RETAINS CONTROL OF ANTWERP MUNICIPAL POLITICS,MRS,SCHROYENS IS THE LIKELY NEXT BURGOMASTER OF ANTWERP. BUT CRAEYBECKX'S DEATH AND DELWAIDE'S ADVANCED YEARS OFFER A YOUNGER GENERATION AN OPPORTUNITY TO BREAK WHAT SOME REGARD AS A PETRIFIED POLITICAL MOLD. NO SUCCESSOR,HOWEVER,IS LIKELY TO PROVIDE THE MIXTURE OF FLEMISH NATIONALISM,ADMINISTRATIVE TALENT AND ENGAGING PERSONALITY OF THE MAN WHO DEVOTED A POLITICAL CAREER TO THE PROPOSITION THAT BELGIUM NEEDED AN DESERVED A GREAT FLEMISH CITY TO BALANCE OFF FRANCOPHONE BRUSSELS. FIRESTONE

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